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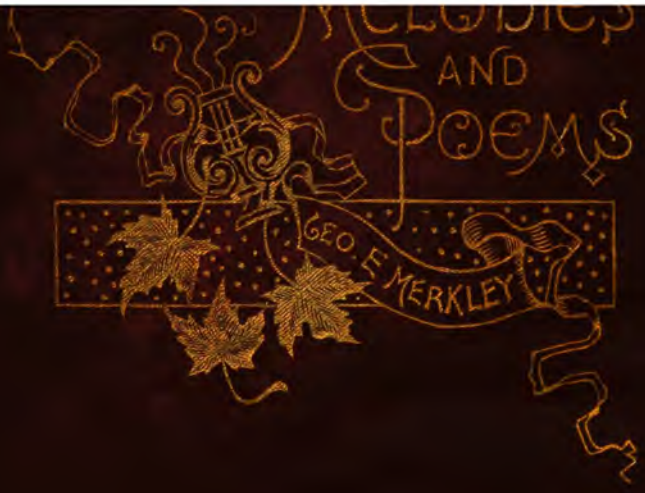

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CANADIAN MELODIES

AND

POEMS

BY

GEORGE E. MERKLEY.

TORONTO:
HART & RIDDELL
1893

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DEDICATION.

TO ONE WHOM CANADIANS EVERYWHERE
HOLD IN
GRATEFUL REMEMBRANCE,
HIS EXCELLENCY THE MARQUIS OF LORNE,
THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED.

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Nam neque chorda sonum reddit quem vult manus et meus,
Poscentique gravem persaepe remittit acutum ;
Nec semper feriet quodcunque minabitur arcus.

—HORACE.

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PREFACE.

NO apology is made for bringing this volume before the public. Several of the poems it contains were mere attempts to relieve the monotonous routine of college life; many of them were written under foreign skies, and this will account for that lack of national spirit which the title of the volume might seem to imply. They have all been written hastily, and with frequent interruptions, so that no time was left for refining or amplifying. These remarks are not made to forestall criticism. Those who look with a jealous eye to the honor of English literature, are bound to pass what judgment they please upon every intruder into the groves of Parnassus, regardless of any extenuating circumstances which may be brought forth by way of palliation.

The dearth of national literature in Canada is to be deplored; and whatever may have a tendency to stimulate activity in this line ought

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not to be discouraged. The history of Canada has a poetic background. Our people are by nature inclined to literature, as may be seen from the high character of our home journals and from the large importation of foreign books and magazines. Yet our national literature is meagre, compared with that of other countries whose advantages have not been superior to our own. Are not the pearly whiteness of our skies, the placid loveliness of our lakes, the lonely majesty of our forests, as well as the heroic struggles of our ancestors for the flag which they so dearly loved, fit themes for poetic inspiration and for minstrel reverie? It is true that we look to the Mother Country for our models; but did not the Greek colonies produce a literature worthy to be compared to that of Athens in her glory?

It is hoped that these remarks may not appear presumptuous; and as the prisoner whose case is hopeless appeals to the mercy of the court in order to ameliorate his condition, so the writer of these verses lays aside his pen, promising to impose no further upon public sentiment.

North Williamsburg, Ont.,

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Prelude.

I.

In the lone ancient pines of the Northland I stood,
When the sun-tinted eaves of the sky were aglow,
And I heard, from the soul of that vast solitude,
Dim notes from a Harp that broke mournfully low;
Oh sweet was the spell which that melody threw,
Till it seemed like the voice of a loved one that's gone,—
Then I knew thee, dear Harp of my Country, I knew
The spirit that breathed in thy low plaintive tone!

II.

Then hushed were thy numbers, and heavy and chill
Was the silence that fell o'er the powerless soul;
Yet soft as the tears which the night dews instill,
And sweet as the dirges when mermaids condole;
Then I strove to recall that sad tone, but in vain,
When anon the vast woods, now all lonely and gray,
Returned the dim notes, and I caught but the strain,
As the last trembling echo died slowly away.

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MELODIES

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The Rainbow.

I.

On a wild cliff that rears its bold crest to the sky
I stood when the Storm-king was raging on high;
Dark lowered the tempest that spread o'er his brow,
And like reeds in the wind the tall crags seemed to bow.

II.

But he soon passed away with his storm banners furled,
And a sun-tide of glory burst forth o'er the world,
While around the dark East, ere the dayspring's decline,
Curved the bright bow of peace with its promise divine.

III.

Beneath the broad arch in the valley below
Lay the home of the rich, lay the cot of the low;
There in beauty secluded the hamlet arose,
And the churchyard beside lay in quiet repose.

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IV.

There the aged were waiting in life's sunset tide ;
And the young, they were there in the springtime of pride,
And the fair, whose soft cheek, with its beauty untold,
Bore the seal of the grave on its delicate mould.

V.

There was Misery's tear, there was Gladness and Mirth,
There was Grief that bowed low at the desolate hearth,—
But the bright bow rose high up to heaven above,
And clasped all beneath in its ardor of love.

VI.

And I thought, O sweet emblem of glory and grace,
Of a Love that clasps all in its fervent embrace ;—
Or the sunshine of life, or the gloom of the pall,
The living, the dead, it encircles them all.

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In the Land of the Sun.

I.

In the land of the sun—in that deep fervent clime,
Where Beauty forever doth smile,
Though the ripened fruit falls, yet the tree in its prime
Is bearing fresh flowers the while!

II.

Thus the heart mid the fervor of youth's sunny day,—
Though false you may deem it or true,
Drops the old loves, that hapless fall fading away,
While it blooms mid the fragrance of new.

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The Sailor's Bride.

I.

It was eve,—at anchor riding
Stately ships were lulled to rest;
And the burnished sun was gliding
Down the golden pillared west.
On a floral beach where madly
Lashed old ocean's foaming tide,
In half-broken accents sadly
Mourned the sailor's lonely bride:

II

"Oh, ye winds on restless pinion,
Hovering o'er the dusky deep,
Tell me in what lone dominion
Does my sailor lover sleep?
Down beneath the rolling ocean,
Where the twining corals grow,
'Neath the wild wave's ceaseless motion
Does he slumber cold and low?

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III.

"Now perchance the night winds blowing
On a shore all wild and drear,
Wave the tomb weeds o'er him growing
Undisturbed for many a year.
Oh! to me how sad and lonely
Seems the course of life for'er,
Haunted by vague memories only,
Which like ghosts yet linger near.

IV.

"Years have fled since last we parted
On that most memorial night,
When in sadness, broken hearted,
Turned I to the moon's wan light;
There some vague ghost seemed to linger,
With a tale too sad to tell,
And with lifted palsied finger,
Seemed to sigh, 'Farewell! farewell!'

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V.

"Well I knew it was a token
From death's dim and shadowy sphere,
And hope's golden cup fell broken,
Dewed with many a falling tear.
Every bud of joy and gladness,
Every flower that love had fed,—
All in memory's urn of sadness,
Mingled with the withered dead."

VI.

While she spoke the tears of twilight
Fell upon the dying day,
And the murky, misty skylight
On the slumbering ocean lay:
And the winds the lone beach sweeping,
Bore no tidings to her ear;—
Till beside the maiden weeping
Stood her sailor lover dear.

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The Broken Mirror.

I.

In my chamber of gloom and sadness,
A broken mirror lies ;
It gleams with a boding madness,
Like the light from a thousand eyes ;
And I know not what evil spirit
Hath spread its sombre wing,
That my fate should ever merit
So sad a happening.

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II.

Oh, once its case of amber
Flashed a glory o'er the walls!
But now in my dreary chamber
The sunlight never falls;
For shattered and broken forever
Lies that mirror on the floor,
And the peace I once knew shall never
Return to my bosom more!

III.

In my heart so dim and lonely
A broken mirror lies
In the dust of dead hopes, which only
Recalls forgotten sighs;
And forever a spell enthralls me,
And a longing fills my breast,
And a spirit voice now calls me
To the valley of unrest.

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The Chieftain's Lament.

I.

All lonely and lone in the twilight he stood
On a cliff by the misty St. Lawrence;
And wailing thus moaned his complaint, while the flood
Rushed darkly beneath him in torrents:

II.

"O land of my fathers, no longer I view thee
In beauty primeval as once thou wert clad;
Oh where are the forests that first when I knew thee
Stretched boundless in beauty the bosom to glad?

III.

"Alas, oh how altered! what varying changes
Have saddened the scenes where in childhood I strayed,
No longer the wild deer in buoyancy ranges,
Nor tracks of the panther are seen in the glade.

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IV.

" My sad eyes now scan the wide, wide devastation,
Nor friends nor fond vestages there do they meet,
For the loved of my heart with the pride of my nation
Have mingled their dust 'neath the Pale-faces' feet.

V.

" Oppressed and down-trodden and driven to anguish!
What, what can the grief of my bosom gainsay?
Oh will they, Great Spirit, forever thus languish
Till the last of my people have withered away?

VI.

" Ah no!—they will rise on a day great in glory,
And triumph in pride o'er the dust of the foe,*
And their valorous deeds in traditional story
Shall pass with the current of years as they flow.

VII.

" But where, ah! oh where are the loved and the cherished
That brightened my home near the deep woody dell?—
They are gone, by the hand of the Pale-face they've perished,
And coldly they sleep in their moss-covered cell.

* This belief is current among the Indian tribes of North America.

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VIII.

"Above them the drooping white willow is weeping,
And lowly the damp-breathing night-winds complain,
And the wan, silent moon her still vigil is keeping,
While their dove-spirits* mourn unavenged all in vain.

IX.

"Ye Pale-face, I hate ye, I scorn ye to madness,
I loath to despair, but I cannot avenge.
All wretched I moan and ye scoff at my sadness.
Oh Spirit! Great Spirit! revenge, oh, revenge!"

X.

He paused for a moment, then from the lone height
Plunged into the dark rolling river;
And the mad foaming billows lashed loud in delight,
Then closed o'er the chieftain forever.

* It is commonly believed among the Indians that the spirits of the dead turn into doves.

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Shadow-Land.

(Imitated from the Japanese.)

I.

White-winged birds are playing
In the sunset heavens aglow,
White-sailed ships are straying
On the sunset sea below,—
But neither the birds above that are flying,
Nor the ships, where'er they may be,
In beauty and strangeness ever vying,
Are meant for me.

II.

The elm tree dances, while, lazily wooing,
The zephyr passes along;
And aloft on a bough a ring-dove cooing,
In ardor breathes his song;—
But neither the dove, nor the zephyr blowing,
Which speaks to flower and tree,
Nor the deep-dyed fringe of evening glowing,
Are meant for me.

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III.

I turn my face to yon stately mountain,
Towering aloft in sunset glow,
With her lilied dell and ice-bound fountain,
And purple peak of snow;
In her secret alone are the stars and clouds,
And her beauty shines on the sea,
But the matchless scene a pall enshrouds,—
'Tis not for me.

IV.

From twilight's tomb in sadness
Comes the breath of the sleeping rose,
Soft as the flush of sunset gladness
Its spirit about me flows;
And I hear in the silent depths around me
The voices of things to be,
And dreams from the infinite shore surround me—
These are for me!

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V.

Shadowy sails that are sent to meet me,
Flapping the shadowy air ;
And shapes of beauty that rise to greet me,—
Are ye phantoms, and yet so fair ?
Now breaking the bands of the dusk asunder,
Tremulous stars dawn in mystery ;
But they shine not a ray for the dark world under—
They shine for me !

VI.

Ye stars that beam when the soul grows tender,
Deep stars unknown to the skies,
Now fairly shining, now veiling your splendor,
Are ye visions, oh, radiant eyes ?
On the shore of the silent, thick shadows are falling,—
Veiling an infinite sea,
And spirits moving there are calling—
Calling for me !

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An Ode.

We stand by a sunlit river,
Where wavelets, wild and free,
Flashing and glittering ever,
Rush onward to the sea ;
O'er its bosom, brightly gleaming,
A golden halo glows,
As, in argent splendor dreaming,
Its current onward flows ;
There the golden sunlight pillows,
And music ever wells,—
But beneath those tossing billows
Oft an undercurrent swells.

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Still the tide flows onward gladly,
With music soft and low,
And we know not, oh, how sadly,
The waters moan below!
There the cruel rocks are rigid,
And wrapt in sable gloom;
And the cold, dark depths are frigid
As an icebound wintry tomb;
Yet the soul is lured to gladness,
As the billows rise and flow,—
But the current's mournful sadness
No heart may ever know.

Life's stream thus, ever rapid,
Flows onward merrily;
Though its glory may be vapid,
No sorrow do we see;
And a smile may gild a feature,
As the billows onward roll
O'er the rugged rocks of nature
Deep in the human soul,
Ah! the smile speaks naught of sorrow,
Though with sadness it may vie,—
But no solace can we borrow
From the mockery of a sigh.

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Oh ! who would wish to treasure
Aught of life's tinsel show,
When, with every draught of pleasure,
Is drained the dregs of woe !
Yet every sigh of sadness,
And every pang of pain,
Is thrilled with a sense of gladness,
We cannot quite explain,—
But deep where the waters darkle,
And surges ever moan,
True pearls of splendor sparkle
That may deck a kingly crown

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The Grave of a United Empire Loyalist.

I.

On the brow of a hill two tall oak trees expanding enclose
A deep archway of shadow that clasps in its bosom a tomb;
And oft have I seen as the sun in full glory uprose,
How he peered o'er the steep of the hill through that archway of gloom.

II.

Then when evening would fall, and night with her dewy finger
Pressed on her chilly lips, would hush in deep stillness the hour,
There in that archway the dying sunlight would linger,
And tarry longest as if held by some mystical power.

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III.

And oft in the noonday of youth, when the sunlight there lay,
Have I turned my footsteps to pass by that archway, which seemed
To swing wide its portals and welcome the ebb-tide of day,
While the oak trees stood pensive, as though they inwardly dreamed.

IV.

I remember the rustic rail-fence half fallen in ruin,
Like the surf-dashed wreck of a vessel upheaved on the shore,
With its timbers half clinging together, half scattered, yet true in
Its station remaining, and true to its purpose of yore.

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V.

I remember the tall hardy thistle and golden rod growing,—
Close neighbors were they—for the same clod of mould did they share;
No flowers bloomed there; why should flowers be ever found blowing
O'er dust that knew naught of life's joys? why should flowers bloom there?

VI.

I remember the rude timbered bier, that sad emblem of death,
As it stood o'er the grave with its purpose fulfilled evermore;
Around it grew dank weeds and ivy with poisonous breath,
That gave it a false guise of life, despite the dread semblance it bore.

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VII.

Long, long had it been since the patriot there had been
borne,
Long years since he fought for his king, for his
country he bled;
But lament yet thy loss, O my country! thy loss deeply
mourn,
'Tis meet thou should'st mourn, ever mourn for a
patriot dead.

VIII.

He fought for his country and king, and naught could
he claim,
But a loyalist patriot's grave—yet oh, better by far
Than an empty bauble ever vaunting in Liberty's name,
And a rebel grave upheaved beneath Victory's star.

IX.

Oh, mourn thou my country, 'tis well thus a vigil to keep,
And a tribute be paid to one who so loved you and
blent
His being with thine; let him sleep, it is well, let him
sleep—
A hill-top his grave, a country his monument.

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X.

Yet not here alone, but in many a spot may be found,
Neglected and lone, though still cherished, our Loyalists' graves;
And no footfall of rebel or foeman shall ever resound,
While the flag of their faith and their freedom above them still waves.

XI.

Yes, peaceful they rest on thy hill-tops, O fair Canada,
The brave on whose valor the dawn of thy hope first arose;
And should glory decline, and thy day-star fade slowly away,
The sunlight of hope would still linger where'er they repose.

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O'er Crag and O'er Dune.

I.

O'ER crag and o'er dune, through the vale and the grove,
Adown the wild rivulet swept,
From fountains unseen, in the caverns above,
Where Winter his night-revels kept;
And loudly it laughed as it eddied and whirled,
Surging round in its gladsome career;
For Spring had come forth with her banners unfurled,
Giving joy, giving joy to the year.

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II.

And I saw, as the broad summer sun rose on high,
And poured down his flood-tide of light,
That the rivulet shrank till you scarce could descry
Its glimmer and wonted delight.
Then the winds, as they swept by its desolate shore,
Broke mournfully on the lone ear;
For the flowers that bloomed on its banks were no more—
In the dust they lay withered and sere.

III.

'Tis thus in the springtime of life, oh! how oft
Ambition's full tide clearly flows,
And the winds, half oppressed with perfume, breathe so soft
Till the broad summer sun deeply glows.
Then the rivulet shrinks in its cold, flinty bed,
And the winds, with their doleful refrain,
Drift the sere, withered leaves of fond hopes that are dead,
And mourn o'er life's desolate plain.

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They But Dream Who Believe.

They but dream who believe that the heart can be ever
Found true in its fervent devotion,
That naught in the noon-tide of youth can e'er sever
The bonds of enchanting emotion ;
For stern Fate commands—and the day-star grows pale,
And the angels weep softly above,
And we hear, mid the sound of a low, broken wail,
" Oh, what is more faithless than love ? "
But some heart must break, though the world still moves on,
Unmindful of smiles and of tears ;
And some bosom must throb with the light of life gone,
Alone through the desolate years !

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The Magic Ring.*

I.

Oh, had I the ring which the Talmud says
The Prince of Sages wore,
I'd flash on thy soul its magic rays,
And all mystery there explore!

II.

There would be no secret, dark, ill-boding,
But my mind should read aright;
No nameless horror forever goading,—
As vague as the visions of night.

III.

But restless dreams should then have peace,
And sorrow be banished from view,
And anguish and toil forever cease;—
For I'd know if *one* heart be true.

*It is said somewhere in the Talmud, I believe, that King Solomon had a certain ring, which, when he would turn so that its rays would flash full upon any one, that person was compelled to tell what he was thinking about.

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An Autumnal Dirge.

I.

Pale shines the sun through azure-lidded clouds
That softly float in ambient light arrayed,
And a dull, shadowy gloom anon enshrouds
The leafless forest and the opening glade.

II.

No sound is heard save the soft-chanting waves
Low murmuring on the shadowy-mantled sea,
And the sad, moaning dirges in their caves
Struggling, like fettered spirits, to get free.

III.

But as the day declines, the slanting beams
In mellow lustre shine so calm and pure;
A radiant flood of sunset glory streams,
That lovelier grows and lovelier grows obscure.

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IV.

Thus passed the day through Hesper's gates of gold,
Hushing in wonder-like repose the earth,
Proclaiming, with its colors, bright and bold,
The tidings of a glorious morrow's birth.

V.

Ah! many a life like this, in dark despair
Is doomed to bear the burden of its sorrow,
But in its sunset depths a beauty rare
Foretells the dawning of a happy morrow.

VI.

Let us be patient,—life has many woes,
And hopes like autumn leaves fall thick and fast;
But a dark day has oft a beauteous close,
And a sweet dawn is the reward at last.

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Songs Unsung.

I.

There are songs yet unsung, that, though silent, we feel,
As over the soul their faint melodies steal ;
Like the spell of enchantment which fairies would weave,
To fetter the victim they mean to deceive.

II.

'Tis vain to resist them : by day and by night
They impart to the soul a deep, quiet delight,
And we feel that their language the sense overpowers,
As the air when oppressed with the perfume of flowers.

III.

When sorrow's dark shadows come like a death pall,
And the dead leaves of hope by adversity fall,
They come o'er the desert that looms in the heart,
And a newness, a freshness, a verdure impart.

IV.

In the blue purpling waves of the sun-tinted sky,
In the moonbeam, the sunbeam, the vesper's low sigh,
In the still quiet eve, and the night-wind's low moan,
Unembodied in words, yet to thought are they known.

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v.

In the low languid zephyr that steals through the dell,
With a sweetness and sadness like lovers' farewell;
In each flower and meadow, each leaflet and brook,
They each add a page to that mystical book.

VI.

O'er each object of nature alike they unfold
A veil of deep mystery ever untold;
For the rose in its modest and calm peaceful rest,
Has infinite secrets enclosed in its breast.

VII.

Can it be that the spirit of genius yet lives,
And to nature this chain of enchantment thus gives;
That the souls of the dead, in this beautiful guise,
Beam out like the light of some love angel's eyes?

VIII.

Ah, no!—'tis a glory through life's mist that strays,
Like the dawning of morn through an autumn's thick haze,
'Tis the light of a glory for ever to shine,
'Tis a something within us—a something divine.

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Compages Ossium.

(Lines composed while looking into an opened grave from my study window.)

I.

In sad reflection thee I scan,
Lone tenant of this cell;
Oh, could'st thou speak to mortal man,
What mysteries would'st thou tell!

II.

Here hast thou lain in sleep profound,
And years, long years, have fled,
Since friends and loved ones, gathering round,
Wept o'er thy lowly bed.

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III.

Perchance through long and lonely hours,
With heart-sick grief they mourned;
And clad thy early grave with flowers,
As oft as spring returned.

IV.

Perchance 'twas wit or beauty's queen,
Or wealth, that here lies low;
But who or what thou may'st have been,
It matters nothing now.

V.

What thoughts were thine, what dreams of fame,
What pride that would transcend!
But grief, or guilt, or woe, or shame,
All here would seem to end.

VI.

We little know, perchance thy bier
Was borne by willing knave,
Whose ruthless hand hath laid thee here
To fill a pauper's grave.

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VII.

In sad reflection thee I scan,
Lone tenant of this cell;
Oh, could'st thou speak to mortal man,
What mysteries would'st thou tell!

VIII.

Now all is o'er—how vain, how weak,
Are earthly strife and power—
The bubble on the brooklet's cheek,
The tempest of an hour.

IX.

Oh, human pride, how weak, how vain!
An evanescent breath;
Oh life!—the memory of a pain,
That will not die with death.

X.

What checkered things our lives will be,
How awful to behold,
When in eternity we see
Life's motley web unrolled!

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Mystics.

I.

Two rose bushes grew side by side:
The light of heaven bathed them both;
The dews of heaven decked them both;
Yet one grew tall and beauteous to behold,
The other drooped and died,
Its beauty all untold.
The dews that decked the one to bloom,
But decked the other for the tomb;—
What mystery in their growth!

II.

Shadows were they of something real,
Shadows which none may ever see,
But every heart may feel.
The light of heaven bathed them both,
The dews of heaven decked them both,
And both were wrapped in mystery;
Yet one was doomed to sturdy growth,—
The other doomed to die!
And who may ask the reason why?
Having been something, can they be
Nothing to all eternity?

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Eyes That Are Used to Weeping.

I.

Eyes that are used to weeping
Through lonely hours of gloom,
And silent vigils keeping
O'er a loved but hopeless tomb ;
From beyond Life's dusky curtain,
From the shore of the dim unknown—
Where vague shadows flit uncertain—
Comes a message all thine own :

"The deeper becomes the measure
Of the cup of grief you drain,
The larger the draught of pleasure
For you it may contain."

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II.

Hearts that are used to breaking
O'er vows that have come to naught,
That, in hopeless silence aching,
With pain are overfraught;
Though Life's taper be dimly burning,
So that shadows faintly fall,
There comes through this vale of mourning
A spirit voice to all:

"The deeper becomes the measure
Of the cup of grief you drain,
The larger the draught of pleasure
For you it may contain."

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Oh, Thou Hast Wept Long.

I.

Oh, thou hast wept long, yet thy heart is still aching ;
There are tears that ne'er fall, though the sad heart
be breaking ;
And that bright day of hope—all too soon 'tis passed o'er,
And the light of thy life has gone out evermore.

II.

When the heart is left lonely there's naught can atone :
Though a nation weep with thee—thou weepest alone ;
And thine is a sorrow too deep e'en for tears
To relieve the lone heart through the desolate years.

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III.

We are told that a goddess once dwelt here below,
Who, for some sad mischance, was doomed ever to woe ;
And her tears, as they fell on this cold world of ours,
Springing up from the dust, bloomed in bright fragrant flowers.

IV.

And oft have I gazed on those sad eyes of thine,
Where beauty's soft lustre seems ever to shine,
And have thought that the tears of the just may yet bloom
In fragrance and beauty beyond the dark tomb.

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Transition.

I.

I AROSE at that dim-lined hour,
When the day and the morning meet;
And I passed by the city tower,
Far, far through the dusty street.
And I went by meadows and fountains
Till I came where frowning high,
A range of towering mountains
Hid their summits in the sky.

II.

But a troubled spirit led me,
Lured by some guiding star,
And o'er the dim heights sped me,
To sunset realms afar;
So with yearning and strife that seemed ever
To be linked with toil and pain,
I crossed with a mighty endeavor,
And passed beyond in the plain.

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III.

And a nameless terror bound me
As I gazed on those earth-born spires,
Which, towering above and around me,
Seemed wrapped in lurid fires;
And a spirit of doubt passed o'er me,
And I murmured with half-bowed head,
"Hath ever a mortal before me
Crossed over a height so dread?"

IV.

But on I passed, unheeding,
Through the noontide's ebbing light,
While, ever behind me receding,
Sank the mountains lessening height;
Till at last 'neath the distant heaven,
The scarce seen crests upreared
In the purple waves of even,
Sank down and disappeared.

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V.

I arose at that dim-lined hour,
When youth and manhood meet,
But Grief and o'erwhelming power
Cast her burden at my feet;
And it rose like a mountain dreary,
And my heart was faint within,
For my soul grew sick and weary
In a world of death and sin.

VI.

But with yearning and strife that seemed ever
To be linked with toil and pain,
I crossed with a mighty endeavor
And passed beyond in life's plain;
And as the broad noon was sinking;
I beheld in the distant light
The giant mountain shrinking
And fading on my sight.

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VII.

Now the sunset shadow lengthens,
While the light of evening fails,
And the holy calm which strengthens
The worn out soul prevails;
And I look to the distant heaven,
Where the mountain late upreared,
And lo, in the purple even
It hath almost disappeared!

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The Mystery of the Sea.

I.

The good ship cleared the harbor bar,
And a fair west wind was blowing;
The misty mainland, stretching far,
O'er the sunlit sea was glowing.

II.

And the captain paused as the deck he paced,
While visions of home came o'er him;
And a weeping mother his fancy traced
In the scenes that passed before him.

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III.

And in the cabin with tiny hands
Two children together were playing,
While a weary mother in mission lands,
Heart-sick for them was praying.

IV.

Years passed—so long, so lone the time
Since the good ship had departed,
And in Columbia's sunny clime
Died a mother, broken-hearted.

V.

Years passed—and a mother forlorn, alone,
Aweary with waiting and sighing,
Afar in India's burning zone
Lay, broken-hearted, dying.

VI.

And the cruel, restless, rolling ocean
Complains its bitter part;
But oh, far down 'neath the waves wild motion
Lies the grave of many a heart!

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Faith.

I.

Thou hast seen how a ring in its clasp may enfold
A diamond more dazzling, more precious than gold;
And the gem to the ring gives a lustre more bright,
Like the glance from the eye of an angel of light.

II.

Thus Faith is a ring, we may see in its grasp
A gem more resplendent than gold may enclasp;
'Tis the Pearl of great Price set by Heaven above
In that ring is the gift of obedient love.

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A Lament.

(From an unpublished Drama written in early life.)

I.

Once lightly I roamed o'er these green fields and meadows ;
As bright as my future all things seemed to shine ;
And in the clear heavens there hovered no shadows,
For all seemed a realm of glory divine.

II.

Now changed is this realm—all bliss has departed,
And chill does the river of life seem to flow ;
In these meadows and moors, where I wandered light-hearted,
Naught, naught can I trace but a region of woe.

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III.

Now in the bright woodland the sweet birds are singing,
Their notes in soft concord float through the calm air ;
While in deepest distress now my sad heart is wringing,
And ever must throb 'neath a burden of care.

IV.

My heart, that once beat with a rapid emotion,
Now droops like the vine in the winter's cold blast ;
Its tendrils have withered, and weary its motion,
As the dirges, recoiling, sweep moaningly past.

V.

No more o'er the days of my childhood I'll ponder,
No more o'er those scenes which I once held so dear ;
But, with grief my allotment, I'll drearily wander
Life's dark vale of gloom but a while—yet fore'er.

VI.

The sunbeams they come—but they melt not my sadness ;
The bright buds they ope—but they mock with their bloom ;
For, ah ! the next time that they bloom in their gladness,
They'll bloom but to fade on my desolate tomb.

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Ember Pictures.

I.

When silence and darkness fling their chain
O'er life's contemplative hour,
And our thoughts, in a dream-like mazy train,
Flit off to memory's bower;
There's a lingering breath of a faint perfume,
That in madness we love to cherish,
Like a flower in bloom on a sepulchral tomb,
That is hopelessly doomed to perish.

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II.

We linger a while in this magic spell,
By the weirdness of thought enchanted,
Till ghostly phantoms rise and swell,
And the soul is vision-haunted.
But the charm enthralls us like a swoon ;
In its sweetness we love to languish,
Though the shrivelled heart, like the waning moon,
Sinks down in bitter anguish.

III.

But when from the mind we deign to fling
This shadowy, death-like legion,
Why do our thoughts in ardor cling
To that ghastly peopled region?
There's a spirit within—the chainless soul—
That points to the world of spirits ;
And a destiny great, beyond mortal control,
That the soul itself inherits.

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POEMS

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A Legend of Dead Man's Lake.

"Dead Man's Lake is a lonely sheet of water lying in a desolate region of the Indian Peninsula, between Lake Huron and Georgian Bay. It is situated in a forest of dead pines and hemlocks, blighted by bush fires long before the memory of any living man, and this adds materially to the desolation of an already dreary region of swamp and rock. The following legend is based on tradition, and the Indians to this day believe that the body of the murdered chief lies with upturned face at the bottom of the lake."—Anon.

I.

Sad vale of death that moaneth dreary,
As if weighed 'neath a burden of care,
Even the sun shines cold, and his beams wax weary
In thy vacant shadowless air;
And the winds o'er the breast of thy lone lake sweeping,
Bear echoes from the tomb,
And thy desolate pines their death-watch keeping,
Ever whisper this tale of gloom:

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II.

Long years ago, (so long that in telling,
A weary tale 'twould make)
An aged chief with his tribe was dwelling
On the shore of this desolate lake.
But life then bloomed here, and in beauty tender
The wild-flowers lifted their eyes,
Till it gleamed like a vale of magic splendor
Just fallen from the sunset skies.

III.

Here Wenonda dwelt in this vale of water,
Till the Spirit-voice should call,
And with him Alissa his dusky daughter—
Loveliest of maidens all.
And many a chieftain fain had woo'd her,—
From distant lands they came—
But in vain they sought, for none who viewed her
The light of her smile could claim.

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IV.

None, none—save a kinsman long since cherished,
In life's bright morning scene,—
Now all but the memory had perished
Of what they once had been.
But Alissa oft in silence pondered
O'er the voice that spoke her fate,
And Oneydo where'er his footsteps wandered,
Bore a heart half love—half hate.

V.

For a Spirit-voice had come with its warning—
With words that deeply warn,—
"From the distant land of the rich-robed morning,
From the clime where the sun is born,
A chieftain shall come to this vale of water,
In a chieftain's state and pride,
To woo Wenonda's lovely daughter,
And bear her away as his bride."

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VI.

Then sinking low, the voice grew dimmer
That fell on Wenonda's ear
Till it blent with the breeze and the wan star's shimmer
When the midnight hour grew near.
And the chieftain forgot that warning never,
And the maid and the lover knew
That all was o'er—yet in silence ever
Each heart to the other beat true.

VII.

Thus many moons arose, and waning,
Gave place to other moons,
Till one night o'er the Lake a lone star reigning
Swung low,—and then eftsoons
Came again that Voice through the dim air falling—
Well understood by one,
And Wenonda went at its mystic calling
To the land of the setting sun.

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VIII.

Now, the waiting long and the anguish ended,
Came Oneydo o'er the tide,
And ere two moon's again ascended
Claimed Alissa as his bride.—
Then each day sped on, as an angel golden
Had passed with beaming eyes,
While yet in whose rich-dyed robes are holden
The airs of paradise!

IX..

At length from the land of ocean currents,
Where mists were born of old,
From beyond the twin streams' * mighty torrents,
Came a stranger chieftain bold.
Of giant form, and with dark eye glancing,
And visage grim and sere,—
The somber plumes o'er his dun brow dancing,
Dropped shadows boding fear.

* The Ottawa and St. Lawrence rivers were thus referred to by the Indians.

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x.

To Oneydo he came as some dreaded token,
For which naught can win surcease;
Few deeds were done, few words were spoken,—
They smoked the pipe of peace.
But over that vale passed an unseen power
Three times with the setting sun,—
Then by that still lake at the midnight hour,
A murderous deed was done.

xi.

Uprose the sun in heaven's vault slowly—
All hid in mist, full soon
The stars shrank back, and, sweeping lowly,
Low dipped the horned moon.
But Alissa was gone—through the vale they sought her,
And the stranger chief was gone;—
False, false was the heart of Wenonda's daughter—
Both fled with the breaking dawn.

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XII.

And the still, broad lake its secret keeping,
Lay hushed and mute for aye ;
But in its depths in silence sleeping
Oneydo lowly lay.
None knew—but War's dark tempests lowered,
And broke with fiery mood,—
When the moon her light o'er the dim vale showered
Her beams were red as blood.

XIII.

Long waged the war with frightful slaughter,
Long and dismal was its reign,
Till dyed with blood was the vale of water,
And many a chief was slain.
Still Hatred reigned—her fury never
Abated till, came the day
When Wenonda's tribe had passed forever
From the haunts of men away.

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XIV.

Now ages have passed, and the vale lies lonely—
Nor sign of life is there,
And the blasted pines are standing only
In the cold and lifeless air.
Yet oft when the midnight tempests lower
A phantom cloud low swings,
Then is heard o'er the Lake at that solemn hour
The flap of invisible wings.

XV.

The deer to his night-bound haunts, unheeding,
Should he pass by this desolate Lake,
But quickens his pace, and faster speeding
His phantom-flight doth take.
And the wild geese southward or northward hying,
If they pass o'er this vale in their flight,
Turn their course, till higher and higher flying,
They are lost to the searching sight.

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XVI

Well the red man knows the dismal story—
Knows where Oneydo lies ;
He hath seen his corse all pale and gory
Looking helplessly up to the skies ;
And to burning rage forever fated,
He is doomed to endless woe ;
For there must he lie till Vengeance is sated,
Ere rest his spirit can know.

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THE VIGIL.*

(A Romaunt of the late Rebellion in the U.S.A.)

I.

THE Southern sun with his deep flood of light
Was slowly sinking, and the moated tide
Hung heavy o'er the dusky brow of night.
Along the gilded west rose far and wide
A range of hills; a vale on either side
Where rich magnolias grew, stretched far adown;
And in this hollow vale might be descried,
Where long the rose and hyacinth hath blown,
A modest cabin's roof with woodbine overgrown.

*A similar story has been told by Francois Coppee in a French poem bearing the same title.

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II.

Within this cabin, on a summer's eve,
Upon a couch a wounded soldier lay ;
Propped up beside a window to relieve
His aching brow, he watched the dying day.
Anon his eyes would follow far away
The burnished dove disport on gilded wing,
Then nearer the gay oriole swoop at play ;
And heard the while the merry mock-bird sing,
Till Slumber o'er his brow her leaden chain would fling.

III.

Then in fond dreams his Fancy oft would trace
His Northern home beside the winding stream,
A mother's fervent kiss and long embrace,
A sister's streaming tears, or the mild beam
Of fairer eyes, where love-lit thoughts would seem
To melt in tears. Oh, pictured vision bright !
Too soon to fade,—gone with the fleeting dream,
Like shooting stars that fade away in night,
And leave no trace behind to mark their sudden flight.

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IV.

Oft would he start in wild delirium,
And grasp with frenzied hand the fancied blade,
As if he heard the regimental drum
Sounding to arms ; for dire Fever preyed
Upon his young life's blood, and oft betrayed
That Death with dragon mouth stood yawning nigh,
Eager to seize his prey, nor would be stayed
By Art's firm hand or Pity's tear-dewed eye,
From his dread course, fell Demon of eternity.

V.

And as the fitful dream of parting life
Thus came and went, there watched beside
The dying soldier's couch of pain and strife
A gentle maid. In eager haste she tried,
As oft would rise and ebb life's surging tide,
To check the pulse, to soothe the heart's distress,
To minister the potion that would hide
Anguish and pain in deep forgetfulness ;—
Irene performed the while such task of tenderness.

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VI.

Hers was an aspect singularly mild,
With radiant brow deep-arched, obscurely clear,
And dark affrayed eyes, half-meek, half-wild,
That told the fount of pity welling near.
Twice gazed you on that face ere 'twould appear
That Time had all too early cast his pall
O'er the bright blooms that Youth and Beauty wear ;
For mingled there hope, grief, doubt, fear, and all
That turn the human heart to tenderness—or gall.

VII.

The day declined, night's dusky mantle fell,
And evening's hush lay lightly o'er the vale ;
Still watched Irene like hermit in his cell.
The bright moon rose, and twilight 'gan to fail
As the soft beams fell gently o'er the dale ;
And still she watched with fixed, inquiring view
Upon the soldier's face upturned and pale,—
Alike his name, his lot, his fate, none knew,
Save by the badge he wore,—the Northern coat of blue.

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VIII.

Scarce yestermorn it was since he had come,
Languid and faint from wounds and bitter woe,
Unto the portals of that Southern home,
Which, like the Southern heart, can ne'er forego
The sight of wretchedness, even in a foe,
A mortal foe, when hapless Pity calls
The generous heart unconsciously to show
The claims of mercy ere the mandate falls,
Or soothe the shriveled heart that suffering woe enthralls.

IX.

Still watched Irene ; the bright moon higher rose,
And swung above the vale beneath a cloud.
" How like the orb of hope that rising glows
Fair, 'neath some sullen gloom that would enshroud
All that is bright in life ! " Thus, half aloud,
The maiden spoke ; then silence fell again,
And the soft light gleamed o'er her head, as bowed
She 'neath that aching, sinking sense of pain,
When hope hath sunk from view, and life itself is vain.

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x.

Yet not for him unconscious slumbering there
The maiden mourned; far, far her thoughts were sped
With one who late had gone albeit to share
A soldier's lot, fame—or a grave instead;
Perchance 'twere both, his fate was still unread.
'Tis thus suspense ill brooks the heart's control:
She turned unto the casement half in dread,
As if her thoughts the night-winds could condole;
Her smothered words bespeak the anguish of her soul.

xi.

"O thou pale moon, arrayed in sombre hues,
Thou lookest o'er the earth in awe sublime,
Like some sad, pitying spirit when it views
The mortal clod that linked it once to time.
Oh, tell me, for 'tis said that in thy clime
Fate's mystic scroll is seen for e'er unrolled,
Tell me he lives. Ah, no!—I hear the chime
That speaks the death-note of the brave and bold;
Let fate take back her scroll, the tale must not be told."

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XII.

Time measures woe ; her reign he oft makes brief,
Oft lights the smile that decks the shining tear,
When Hope would fling aside the web of grief,
And over all would in full view appear.
'Twas thus Irene could dash aside all fear,
Could see returning from the unequal strife
Her best beloved, the beauteous South so dear
To both triumphant still, and honors rife
Bestrewn along the path to deck their future life.

XIII.

Away delusive dream !—the soldier wakes,
And round him casts a strange, bewildered eye,
Pale o'er his couch the struggling moonlight breaks ;
Irene, half-startled, checks the smothering sigh,
Looks strangely round, nor scarce can wonder why
Slumber hath flown. Then turns she most in fright
To where the scarce-seen lamp is smouldering by,—
Flushed o'er the room a tide of yellow light,
As fled the darkened shades back to the wings of night.

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XIV.

The soldier spoke, his accents feebly fell,
Irene drew near to catch what he might say.
" I have short time for what I fain would tell,"
He thus began, " this tenement of clay
Must soon dissolve—flit life and light away.
It is a tale to fright thy timid ear,
And yet a burden on my soul doth weigh,
That will not let it part. Nay, do not fear ;
Though shadows cloud my mind, soon light will reappear."

XV.

" Southward we turned." He paused ; then soon began,
" But three days since, albeit it may be more,
By chance we faced the foe, I slew a man ;—
Oh, start not, gentle maid,—'twill soon be o'er.
He stood a sentry at the post which bore
His trust. We took the army by surprise ;
'Twas night, and few there were ; perchance three-score
Prisoners were made. Nay, hide not thus thine eyes ;
Remorse can rend a heart that Pity would despise.

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XVI.

" The skirmish o'er, by chance I found my way
To where the sentry fell, thinking 'twere best
If yet he lived. I had not meant to slay—
He turned on me—my sword pierced through his breast.
Oh! even at times a soldier's heart's oppressed
With pity, too. I saw him writhing still
In agony. The gaping wound undressed
Was pouring out his life. My heart grows chill
Even yet; O God! I thought how slight a thing can kill.

XVII.

" I stooped beside and strove to staunch the wound.
' 'Tis vain,' he said, ' a trust I'll give to thee.'
He bade me loose a packet which was bound
Beneath his cloak. ' I charge thee take,' said he,
' This token to the one who gave it me;
Her picture it contains. Tell her I died
While at the post of duty. Thou mayest see
Her name within.' He turned upon his side,
And slowly ebbed away life's dim-receding tide.

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XVIII.

"I sought a furlough then, but ere 'twas given
Occasion thrust a battle in my way.
We fought, I know not how, but far were driven;
I, wounded, fell; then fled from me the ray
That reason beams. I knew no more till day
Dawned on me here; and now I hear the calling
Of voices strange; and moans, death-dying, lay
Their weight upon my soul, as deeply palling
The tired senses, come clogged shadows thickly falling.

XIX.

"Still let me cling to life; though hope be fled,
That mission I would fill for him whose hand
Gave me the charge; but even that hope is dead,
And from the glass of time the sliding sand
Is almost run. Oh, thou mayest understand
And yet fulfil my unavailing vow.
While yet I breathe on life's uncertain strand,
To thee I give the sacred trust. Even now
Death's touch is at my heart, his chill is on my brow."

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XX.

The faltering voice Irene no longer heard.
She saw the picture she had given to him
Her heart most yearned to reach. Then all appeared
Dark and confused ; the while her senses swim,
The light burns blue, and waning visions dim
Flit o'er her mind ; and voices distant seem
Like troubled waters moaning, phantoms grim,
Shades horrible ; then reason's flickering beam
Lit up—all, all as 'twere a wild, distempered dream.

XXI.

Oh ! there are moments of our life a part,
When the soul's passion is too vast, too deep
For Sorrow's shafts to pierce the quivering heart ;
Feeling is numbed in a half-conscious sleep,
In aching weariness the senses steep,
And a cold chill like death-breath freezes o'er
The fount of tears, and will not let one weep.
Then pent within the spirit's inmost core
The fire burns but consumes not, burning evermore.

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XXII.

Reason returns again, but ever gone
Are hope and happiness,—withered the bloom,
The last flower plucked, but still the stalk lives on,
A living death; the lone sepulchral tomb
Less hopeless is.—Thus fell the blasting doom
Upon Irene. Rayless the gathering night
Which settled o'er her soul engulfed in gloom:
She turned away like one whose vacant sight
All things can dimly see, yet naught can see aright.

XXIII.

Full well she knew the hand that dealt her doom
Lay there outstretched in pleading helplessness;
Should she withhold the potion, death would come
Outreaching time, dark thoughts; but who could guess
If e'er they broke upon her soul's distress?
The night was long, but longer still even then
The night that wrapped her life. Deep shades depress
Her very thoughts in sighs. Nor tongue, nor pen,
Alas! hath Grief to tell that tale of woe again.

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XXIV.

Long, long the night ; its hours crept slowly by,
Each burdened by the weary weight of years ;—
The soldier slept, but o'er the closing eye
Of mortal life fell that deep gloom which wears
The mask of death in Life's dim vale of tears :
He slept ; but ere the Dawn in mantle gray,
Who in the east her purple dome uprears
Each morn, had brought to man another day,
Cold in the embrace of death the soldier slept for aye.

XXV.

All through the long, long night Irene alone
Her vigil kept, and oft she strove in vain,
Ere the slow-ebbing tide of life had gone,
With gentle touch to chase away dull Pain
Which o'er the soldier's brow his heavy chain
Had thrown. But, oh ! it seemed as though
The weight of three-score years of Sorrow's reign
Had fallen upon her life ;—that night of woe,
Had turned her raven hair white as the wintry snow !

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A Fable in Two Cantos.

PRELUDE.

Life is a riddle, deep, majestic, grand,
For all to solve, but few to understand;
'Tis a strange world, some say with stoic bliss,
And straightway vow this globe hath gone amiss;
While some presume and some soliloquise,
"There's less in wisdom than in seeming wise;"
"Silence is golden," spake of old the sage,
The rule holds good in our distempered age;
Then silence keep and learn from meaner things,
From which full many a goodly lesson springs.
Grasp not the shadow that first meets your eyes,
For somewhere near the substance always lies;
A simple story serves to tell the fate
Of many a brain-dashed, vaunting shallow pate.

CANTO I.

A frog dwelt once upon a time
Far up within the northern clime,
'Twas pleasant sure, when Summer threw
O'er wood and lake and mountain blue,

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Her fairy mantle; then the frog,
Exulting loud in many a bog,
Sang siren songs in brake and bush,
Such as would fairly put to blush,
Or fill, good faith, with envious rage
The modern artist of the stage;
And well he might, the pesky elf
Could even understand himself;
And as his voice still louder rang,
He understood the words he sang;
He sang, and leaping sang so clear,
The very breezes paused to hear;
He sang till even the Echoes tired,
To bear his songs no more aspired.
But why dilate upon this song,
Or why a tedious tale prolong?
When Winter raised his elfin wand,
The frog retired to his pond;
His voice was hushed, the winds that kissed
The placid lake his ditties missed,
Straight in a tempest rage they flew,
And colder, wilder, louder blew,
Till Summer could no more endure,
And fled to southern climes secure.

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But when cold Winter, tired grown,
Would drop his wand a moment down,
That self-same instant you might hear
The frog's shrill voice pipe loud and clear.
The Winds delighted sank again,
And gently swept the barren plain ;
And Summer, stirred by some strange force,
Straight to the Northland took her course.

CANTO II.

But once upon a certain time,
Ere Winter visited that clime,
Two idle geese were babbling by,
And little recked the frog was nigh.
They talked of climes so far away,
Where Summer holds eternal sway.
They talked of pearly skies serene,
Of woods forever robed in green,
Of sunny ponds and fairy bogs,—
The paradise of singing frogs.
Then talked they of their journey thither,
And prayed that they might have fair weather.
The frog all meekly sat the while,
Then deigned to ask with winning smile,

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While visions of those tempting skies
Floated before his dazzled eyes:
"Where is that land, most potent bird?
Of it, good faith, I've never heard.
Pray, let me follow, when once more
You bend your course to that fair shore
Where Winter never dare intrude
To cast his spell of solitude."
At this the geese laughed loud and long,
A hissing laugh that checked the song
The frog had formed deep in his throat,—
That song died in one gurgling note.
And then the elder of the birds
Addressed the frog the following words:
"Thou silly elf, pray understand
'Tis many a league unto that land,
And should'st thou e'er presume to go
By single jumps and hops so slow,
Why, sure old age would overtake
Thee ere thou'd reach the fairy brake."
At this the frog at once began:
"I've hit upon a novel plan.
We'll pluck some grass from yonder slope,
And firmly twist it in a rope,

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'Twill do, I think, with single fold,
Then at each end you may take hold,
And I will grasp the middle tight,
A goose at both my left and right,
We'll cleave the upper air so light."
The frog scarce finished ere 'twould seem
The geese consented to the scheme.
They both affirmed with one accord
Such wisdom they had never heard;
Fitting the action to the word,
They soon were sailing through the skies,
Bound for the southern paradise.
The frog swung on the grassy rope,
And did not deign his mouth to ope.
They travelled over many a rood
Of bush and brake and solitude.
At length a farmer, half amazed,
Spied them aloft in mid-air raised,
And much he wondered as he gazed,
And loud the wise device he praised,
And asked whose wisdom 'twas had planned
The wondrous scheme his vision scanned.
The frog, in whose own estimation,
Centred the wisdom of creation,

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Could not the rustic's praise pass by,
Opened his mouth and shouted "I!"—
Scarce had he risked his mouth to ope,
When slipped his jaws from off the rope,
And, like an arrow from a bow,
He dashed upon the rocks below.
Thus died the frog—was ever fate so dread?
And to the realm of shades his spirit sped.

MORAL.

All ye who read, whatever be your state,
Bear well in mind the frog's unhappy fate.
How wise you deem yourself, how great a seer,
'Tis vain to boast, the world cares not to hear.
There's danger oft in speech, be well aware—
The cloak of wisdom is not hard to bear.

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Impromptu.

(Suggested on seeing a vain lady gazing at herself in a mirror.)

Gaze fondly on thy mirrored face,
And there thine imaged beauty trace;
But if, perchance by magic art,
That mirror could portray thy heart,
Down to the dust the glass thou'dst fling,
That could portray so vile a thing!

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TRANSLATIONS

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Horace; Ode ix., Book iii.

HORACE.

While I could thy soul inflame,
And no other dared thee claim,
Persia's monarch could not be
Half so blest as I with thee.

LYDIA.

While I flamed thy soul's first fire,
Ere Chloe could thy soul inspire,
Such heavenly glory then was mine,
As Ilia's fame could not outshine.

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HORACE.

True, Chloe now does claim a part,
And with her lyre sways my heart;
For her, my soul's loved consort—mine,
All to death would I resign!

LYDIA.

For me sweet Calai's spirit burns,
And love for love *my* soul returns,
Twice would I death's grim terrors dare,
That fates my gentle youth should spare!

HORACE.

Should love's delicious dream again,
Fling round our souls that golden chain,
And Chloe hence depart fore'er,
That chain again would Lydia wear?

LYDIA.

Thou, fair as Hesperus of heaven;
Thou, light as is the breath of even,
Yet rasher than the impetuous sea,
I would live and die with thee!

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Horace, Ode xvi., Book iii.

The brazen tower on Argo's shore,
With turret high and bolted door,
And watchful dogs in ambuscade,
Had well secured the enamored maid,
But Jupiter—as fates foretold—
Descending in a shower of gold,
Allured the guards such sight to see,
And thus fulfilled the dread decree ;
For well 'twas known no human power
Could e'er withstand the tempting shower.
Oh gold ! whate'er be thy delight,
Must yield to thy resistless might ;

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Even faithful guards for thee retire,
And, perjured, own their base desire ;
And walls of stone that have defied
The wrath of Jove, are hurled aside.
'Tis known by thy resistless sway,
The charms of beauty melt away,
And gates divide, and tyrants fall,
And shattered yields the embattled wall,
Kingdoms to endless night are hurled,
And Ruin rages o'er the world.
The insatiate thirst for gaining more,
But adds to wealth's increasing store,—
Then, oh, Mæcenas, pride of Rome,
Whose banners wave o'er Freedom's home,—
Care not for pomp and splendor great,
For gold can give—but cannot sate ;
He who temptation's power defies,
Shall gain from heaven what earth denies.
Far from this vain and idle show,
In humble guise I love to go,
Escaping all the toil and pain
Of those who care for naught but gain,
And in some simple, rustic cell,
In sweet contentment seek to dwell ;

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What more to me could Fate consign,
If all Apulia's stores were mine?
The silver stream, the silent grove,
With myrtle bowers interwove,
The yellow corn-field's golden sheen,
The gardens fair, the meadows green,—
These, these are pleasures all unknown
To him who holds a jewelled throne.
Happy am I, though not for me
Sweet nectar hives the laboring bee.
Nor can I claim the clustering vine,
Or Formian casks of ripening wine,
Nor e'en the verdant Gallic mead,
Where flocks in snowy whiteness feed;
Yet what can gilded wealth impart? —
It yields but flattery to the heart.
He whose desire is e'er for more,
Feels worse the pang of being poor,—
But blest is he whom God has given
With sparing hand the gifts of heaven.

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Homeric Garlands*

ILIAD I. 43-52.

Thus spake the old man, praying, and Phœbus Apollo did
hear him,—
Down from the heights of Olympus the god, in anger,
descended;
Over his shoulders were flung the dreadful bow and the
quiver
Bristling with arrows, that rattled as onward he moved in
his anger:
Gloomy as night he went, and aloof from the Greeks'
broad encampment
Sat down in silence,—then forth flashed the bow and swift
sped the arrow—

* This is but a feeble attempt to reproduce Homer in his own majestic Hexameter. Our language contains too many monosyllables to be cast successfully in this rhythm; hence we can give but a faint echo of the dash and roar of old Homer's lines. The passages here reproduced, like most literary gems, lose much of their luster when taken from the settings in which the master has placed them.

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Loud thereupon rose the twang of the silver bow's dreadful rebounding—
Far sped the death-bearing darts; first perished the mules and the fleet dogs,
Then at the Greeks did the angered god straightway aim his arrows—
Dismal by night flared the gleaming red of the funeral pyres.

ILIAD I. 528-539.

Spake the son of Kronos, the while with his dark brows nodding assent—
Straightway ambrosial locks did stream from the head of the Sovereign,
How at that nod did mighty Olympus shake to its centre!
Then they did part there, these two having secretly counciled together,
She from the heights of shining Olympus plunged into the deep sea
Zeus to his palace went, and the gods all at one accord moving,
Rose from their seats together, and stood at sight of their great Sire—

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None durst abide his coming—then Zeus in their midst, going straightway,
Sat on his throne: but Heré had seen all, and knew what had happened,
Knew that silver-foot Thetis had been with her husband entreating—
Thetis, that child of the old Sea Man, had held with him council—
With heart-cutting words she spake, the son of Kronos addressing.

ILIAD III. 1-14.

Now, when drawn up by its leaders each army was marshalled for battle,
Forth moved the Trojan host with clangor of arms and with shouting,
Like to the crying and clamor of cranes from on high when escaping
Wintry storms they fly southward over the streams of the ocean—
Fighting and mingling aloft in the air in dire contention—
Bringing bloodshed and death to the pigmy races of mankind:

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But silently went the Greeks, breathing destruction and hatred,
Mindful, each in the pending combat to aid one another.
Like when Notos, the south wind, pours down a mist o'er the mountain
Dreadful to shepherds but always more pleasing to thieves than the nightfall,
And one can see as far as a stone may be hurled, in the darkness,—
Thus then the turbulent dust arose 'neath the feet of the warriors
Rose in the air from the earth, as through the vast plain they swept onward.

ILIAD VI. 146-149.

As bloom the leaves of the trees, so spring the races of mankind—
Scattered for aye are the leaves by the blasts of one autumn,
Yet do the trees bloom anew when spring-time returns in her glory,—
Budding anew, but to wither and fall with the blasts of the autumn ;
Thus are the races of man—now bloom they, and now they lie scattered.

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ILIAD VI. 466-580.

Thus spake illustrious Hector, and stretched forth his arms to take fondly
His son; but the boy, seized with dread, shrank back to his fair nurse's bosom,
Crying, shrank back, scared thus at the sight of his helmeted father,
Fearful was he of the horse-hair plume o'er the dread helmet waving.
Then did the fond parents smile at the babe, and illustrious Hector
Quickly removed from his head the glittering helmet, and placed it
Gleaming upon the ground, then received he his dear child and kissed him.
Playfully tossing him up, he prayed thus to all the immortals:
"Hear me, O Zeus, and ye other gods, grant that my son may be honored,
Honored for valorous deeds as I 'mong the Trojans am honored!
Grant him to rule with might over Troy, and may he hereafter

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Greater be called than his father! Grant, that he when returning
Homeward from battles well fought, may bear rich spoil from the conquered,
Cheering the heart of his mother with deeds of valor and glory!

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The Dying Slave*

(From the introduction to a Greek prize ode.)

I.

Leave thy gates of darkness, Death,
Come to take my fleeting breath;
Haste, oh, haste to set me free!—
Fettered thus to misery.

II.

Thou shalt not be greeted here
With pallid cheek and gushing tear—
Here no funeral ululation,
Sound of woe or lamentation.

*The slaves of the West Indies considered death as a passport to their native country.

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III.

Gloomy Genius though thou be,
Yet thou dwellest with Liberty;
Here but the encircling dance shall greet thee,
Nought but songs of joy shall meet thee.

IV.

Thine no gloomy, lone dominion,—
Haste thee on thine ebon pinion;
O'er the swelling ocean speed me—
To my long lost home, oh, lead me!

V.

There 'neath the shady citron grove,
By limpid fountains lovers rove,
And there, to loved ones tell again
The heartless deeds of fellow men.

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The Lorelei.

(From the German of Heine.)

I

I know not what it presages,
This sadness of my heart;—
A tale of bygone ages
From my mind will not depart.

II.

The air is cool and is darkling,
And softly flows the Rhine;
The crest of the mountain is sparkling
In the evening's calm sunshine.

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III.

Yonder at ease reclining
Sits a maiden wondrous fair,
Her golden jewels shining,
As she combs her golden hair.

IV.

With a golden comb she is combing,
And she sings a sad, sweet song,
That through the quiet gloaming,
So strangely floats along!

V.

The doomed in his shallop speeding,
Is seized with a pang of woe;—
He drifts on the rocks, naught heeding,
Save the mountain crest aglow.

VI.

Alas! 'neath the waves in their madness,
The sailor and boat are gone;—
And this, with her song of sadness,
The Lorelei has done.

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The Two Streams.

(Adapted from the Italian of Metastasio.)

Quella onda che ruina.

I.

Yon stream that dashes down the Alpine height,
Complains its fate, and struggles in its course,
Till dashed to spray by its impetuous force,
It sparkles like a diamond-shower bright.

II.

Another stream, in hidden vale apart,
Courses its slumbrous way, and ne'er may know
The lustre bright—the full-tide diamond glow,
Its depths might yield to glad the aching heart.

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